

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences  
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, Imatra  
Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management

Milka Aalto

## **Kaiseki workshop**

Thesis 2018

## **Abstract**

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Kaiseki Workshop, 27 pages, 1 appendix

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The objective of this thesis was to develop a workshop around the Japanese Kaiseki cuisine and create a product that could be sold forward later on. The work was done in partnership with Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, and carried out with the students in Saimaa UAS course International Cuisines and Restaurants.

The information for this project was collected from literature, video guides, Internet and by running tests in the kitchen. Main issue with the theoretical part was lack of English or Finnish literature. Project was carried out in two sections: a Kaiseki lecture and a food preparation workshop. The workshop was carried out in the school facilities, kitchen and lunch hall.

Final result of this thesis was a functional workshop. This model will function with outside units, for example community colleges. This type of workshop is recommended for small audiences for its complexity and time-consuming nature.

Keywords: Kaiseki, workshop, lecture, cuisine

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Appendix 1

Lecture PowerPoint

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Basis for project**

As for the topic of this thesis, the author chose to organize a combined lecture and workshop of Kaiseki dining for the students of Saimaa University of Applied Sciences course International cuisines and restaurants as a project-style thesis. As Asian cuisine in general has been rising in popularity during the past few years especially among younger folk, the author thinks it is relevant to this date. People are no longer thinking Asian culture and cuisine as something exotic and too scary to try, but many have little to no idea how to go about trying these new flavours, tools and visions. This is what led the author to think about a workshop for someone ready to try under a more experienced watch.

Kaiseki-style of meal usually consists of an appetizer, sashimi, a simmered dish, a grilled dish and a steamed dish, and it needs to address the eaters with five different flavours as some chefs look that the Kaiseki meal is based on the number five (Pölkki & Valkama 2007). The number of dishes varies from chef to chef, and the more upscale and formal the Kaiseki, the number of dishes usually increase.

Kaiseki dishes are purposefully small, as there are usually quite a few of them in one meal, which addresses the “bite size” trend, which shows in food manufacturing companies making these quick, easy and quick to eat items with simple flavours. Kaiseki addresses this, but in more haute cuisine way. Also, as Japanese food has been added to the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2013 (Pajonas 2014), this project is an effective way to increase the recognition of this fine cuisine.

The dishes are heavily leaning on seasonality and use of the local ingredients, and they are prepared in a way that enhances the flavours of the individual pieces in the dish. These dishes may be thoroughly decadent, but they are healthy and address more than just the sense of taste. Meals are long, and while you have many individual dishes, the overall meal is healthy and well-balanced. Perfect combination for the ever-growing amount of people wanting to treat themselves with something, but still keep eating healthy. Healthy eating

is trending all over the globe, and people acknowledge the importance of what you eat.

BBC's list of food trends in 2017 mentions sea vegetables, healthy snacks, pickles and ferments, and "Insta-ready food" that refers to beautiful and photo-worthy dishes in among their top trends (Hardwick 2017), and Kaiseki delivers.

Base form and idea for this project came from the European cooking schools. They offer courses and cooking classes that people are welcome to join and learn from. In Finland there are no such schools, and if you want to learn, it is either through trial and error, or enrolling into a proper culinary institution, and getting a degree for yourself.

Learning is probably the most prominent basis in this project. Not just the students' that participate in the lecture, but for the author as well. Aside from gaining theoretical knowledge that comes from preparing the lecture and passing the knowledge on, for example necessary cooking skills will be in development during this process as well, since Japanese chefs and home cooks tend to cook their dishes a bit differently from their western counterparts (Moriyama 2005), and these methods at the current time are not in use in the author's kitchen. Also getting people to learn new perspectives about food and to challenge them into trying new things outside their "everyday" cooking.

Many parts of Japanese cuisine have some sort of symbolism hidden, either in the presentation of the food or the ingredients used. The Kaiseki-style dishes especially around new year represent this symbolism used with food and the author is interested to learn more about the meanings embedded in the dishes, Japanese cuisine is a heavily visual one, and they let the ingredients speak for themselves. Dishes are made not to quantity, but quality. They are meant to evoke respect for the ingredients and this is what speak volumes for the author. The Japanese have a mutual understanding that food should not only be for the stomach, but also for the soul to enjoy, so the dishes are prepared as visually appealing to the eye as possible. The author pursuits to present this beauty forward to new audiences.

## 1.2 Review of current situation

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences has offered at least one of this type of workshop, run by Jukka Moilanen, a sausage workshop for customers coming from a greater distance, and it seemed to have a nice reception. Concluding, there is a demand for a project like this if a suitable target market can be found, and right advertising channels. At this time, there are no services of this specific area of cooking available that could be found with basic browsing of internet, nor has any visible advertising anywhere that the author found. During past years Etelä-Karjalan kansalaisopisto has offered some type of workshops regarding Asian culture, but at this time no such services are found at their website. Closest equivalent that could be found were restaurants offering ready packages of lunches and dinners, that will not involve customers otherwise than them coming to eat whichever menu they has prepared.

As mentioned earlier, there is a good chance this specifically Japanese cooking workshop might attract customers well when correctly advertised, because of the rising trends and changing interests in different tastes and overall experiences. Also, for example, companies are taking note on their workers' motivation and health by offering them different free time activities and well-being packages. A service such as this might go well in the restaurant and tourism field especially. A personal view on this, as the author works in retail currently, we have these "activity days" where physical exercise is used to improve health and avoid ergonomics issues.

There are no major Japanese cooking experts, or restaurants for that matter, in the Etelä-Karjala region that the author is aware of. Most of the restaurants offer "Asian" cooking, but it is mainly Chinese with a side of sushi. Some sushi restaurants exist, but their range is in the sushi. This project goes outside the sushi belt, and might inspire people to innovate a new concept restaurant to the region, which would increase the overall interest of this area, as in "Hey, they have this new thing, we need to try it out

### **1.3 Course of the project**

Course of this project changed quite drastically from creating a tasting menu for a selected audience to this wider workshop it eventually ended. As the thesis was built up to get more content to it, the thesis was split into two parts, that would take about five hours in total to execute with the menu planned for this audience. The workshop is quite heavily modifiable based on the customers' needs and preferences, so the timetable is not fixed.

Part one was designed to be the theory, groundwork for the workshop. For this part, about an hour was allocated. For this case in particular, the theory part was implemented two weeks before the second part for timetable reasons, which was not an ideal situation. Ideally both parts would be back to back, so the customer will not have forgot what they learned when they cook. This implementation was in the middle of the International cuisines and restaurant course, so there were some time managing issues, since the course participants had prior engagements, but we worked around those to find time for both parts of the workshop.

The second part of the workshop was designed as a cooking class. The author created a ready menu for the participants and acted as a teacher and manager of the kitchen while the participants cooked, so that they could get their hands on the project and learn of the cuisine and its tricks first hand. Menu for this implementation was quite a simple one, as there was quite strict time window for some of the participants, and the author wanted for the participants to have the whole experience.

### **1.4 Objectives**

For objectives the author chose few main points. Biggest one was to learn. The concept of Kaiseki was completely unknown for the author as well before starting this project, so it was quite a steep learning curve in a short amount of time, but it was highly interesting, and in line with other interest the author has for Asian cuisine and culture overall. Having prior knowledge and information in basic Japanese cooking helped throughout the process, while the concept itself was a new thing. Challenging oneself was included as talking and performing in

front of an audience has been an issue since the beginning of school, this project gave a huge confidence boost for later occasions.

Of course, this thesis was formed also to form a product that could theoretically be performed and sold onwards later in future. Designing a project from the base up, and forming a marketable product was the intention when this thesis came into consideration. Testing the skills needed for this project after learning them in theory would be beneficial for author, that she could perform similar things in the career life.

In recent years, there has been more and more discussion around different diets and healthier eating trends. The author wants to contribute to this by bringing attention to the overall healthiness of Japanese style of cooking, as they tend to prepare their everyday meals a bit differently, preferring ingredients and cooking methods that are healthier

Other objectives include the will to debunk the persistent “Japanese food equals sushi”-mentality that many still carry with them. There are always surprised faces when it is made clear that the cuisine is much more complex. Having some confidence in basic Japanese cooking will help the author in this process.

## **1.5 Delimitations**

This project was limited to the immediate surroundings of Kaiseki cuisine, excluding the theory introductory part for basic Japanese cuisine info, for those who have no prior knowledge of the subject. Kaiseki was the main point of this project, and the author tried to stay in the subject as best as possible, giving accurate and relevant information and picking dishes suitable for a Kaiseki experience. When participants have little to no prior knowledge of Japanese cuisine, for the menu, dishes were limited to simple tastes and easy to make dishes for a pleasant experience.

There is a wide variety of Japanese cooking styles and food types that are left out of this project, such as sushi, that are not a key element of Kaiseki. This particular style of cooking is about a set of pre-defined cooking methods, that the workshop abides by.



Thesis project was chosen mainly for the love of food and preparing it, and the lack for distinctively Japanese cuisine showcasing, for grasping better understanding of another food culture, but also to find out the interest and local knowledge about this type of food. This project would suit further outside school premises, as a paid service for different instances, such as a short course for community colleges, or marketable product for Saimaa University of Applied Sciences.

As the time window for cooking was limited, the menu planned included only the basic form of Kaiseki, where a set of five different dishes is offered, and the meal was treated as a lunch Kaiseki, where the more traditional Kaiseki is considered a dinner. Of the five allocated hours of the project, four went into this cooking part.

## **1.6 Meaning and importance**

The client for this project was the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, and the audience of the course “International Restaurants and Cuisines”, conducted by lecturers Jukka Moilanen and Ann-Mari Karvinen. The project was aimed to develop a functional package that could be productized after the thesis process and aims to be sold forward to other markets. The course was a perfect platform to test a food related product. Saimaa University of Applied Sciences could in theory sell this product out from their facility, thus bringing more visibility and possible income to the school. As this workshop is easy to modify, it suits the needs of different customers, and can act as a base for different Kaiseki-styles as well.

Author has a major interest in the field of Asian cooking, and Japanese cuisine particularly, so the project was picked to further act on that interest, keeping the project meaningful for one. It made the whole thesis process much more interesting and worthwhile, finding out new aspects of a cuisine that is already important for the author. This project also helps the author in the future, as there has been plans for a future career in the field of Asian cuisine, but those are for the longer run, and might not materialize soon.

## 2 Theory

### 2.1 Principles of Kaiseki

This project aimed to produce a workshop around the Japanese Kaiseki dining theme. The aim is to educate those who have little or no prior knowledge of the topic. The author strived to construct a comprehensive package of the topic and deliver it in a professional manner.

Kaiseki comes from Japan, which has been somewhat unfamiliar territory for Western part of the world, until quite recently. While the cooking is based around 7 basic pillars, it is incredibly versatile, as on average, Japanese person eats around 100 different courses compared to the western average of 30 (Moriyama 2005). The Japanese also rely on 7 different basic cooking methods to bring the best out of their cooking, and a basic meal consist usually of three different small portions, each cooked differently, accompanied by rice and miso soup, which is called “ichiju sansai” principle (Tan 2003), and it can be divided into three main areas by the dishes that are offered, and cooking methods during a meal are used only once. (Kosaki & Walter 2005, p.13-14) The Kaiseki style makes an exception here, as it uses “ichiju hassai” principle, having more dishes around the miso soup that is the base for the whole meal.

Kaiseki (懷石) as a word has not always meant this elaborate, multi-course dish. It evolved from a light meal for training monks to help ward off hunger pains, then moving to mean a light meal to be served with a chanoyu, Japanese tea ceremony, to this day's feast of carefully selected and prepared dishes. The characters stand for “bosom” and “stone”, coming from the monks' way of carrying warm stones in their clothes to help with the hunger pain (Murata 2012, p. 8 ). Kaiseki as a word had been used before, but with different characters. Written as 会席料理 it simply means “a cuisine for a get-together”. It is said that Sen no Rikyu, who was a 15<sup>th</sup> century tea master (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1998), connected the “bosom stone” reading way to the Kaiseki meal, as he started to serve light dishes during tea ceremonies. He thought that the powdered green tea was too intense to be enjoyed into an empty stomach, thus preventing the drinker from appreciating the flavour of the tea, and with these small in-between

dishes he solved this. (Murata, 2012 p. 8.) Chefs saw this practice and developed it in their own ways. Formal Kaiseki branched off from the tea ceremony and distinguished itself with high-grade ingredients and lengthy preparation. (Tan 2009).

## 2.2 Inspiration

Kaiseki derives inspiration from multiple haute cuisine styles. Most prominent of those include Royal court cuisine (有職料理, yūsoku ryōri) from the 9<sup>th</sup> century Heian period, Buddhist monk cuisine (精進料理 shōjin ryōri) from 12<sup>th</sup> century Kamakura period, Samurai cuisine of the warriors' household (本膳料理 honzen ryōri) and the tea Kaiseki (茶懷石 cha kaiseki) from the 15<sup>th</sup> century Higashiya-ma era (Asano 2017). All these haute cuisine styles have their marks on today's Kaiseki, as there are at least three distinctive styles ongoing. Chefs balance these cuisine styles to their preferences, since yūsoku ryōri and honzen ryōri are more elaborate and decorated than shōjin ryōri and cha kaiseki are more toned down, simple to the senses. Kaiseki had been said to hail from Kyoto, where it is being held as the high point of Kyoto cuisine, "Kyo kaiseki". Kaiseki is described to be "jewel-like courses served on plates that could be in a design museum" (Brenner & Busico, 2007)

## 2.3 Practices and structure

Normal Kaiseki meal at its most basic form will have five individual dishes, but the amount is at the chef's direction. It depends on his views and ingredients available what he will serve. Dishes in Kaiseki dinner will be served one by one, so that customers may enjoy each dish at its best. Most basic structure looks like this.

*Sakizuke, an appetizer, resembling the French amouse-bouche*

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*Sashimi, uncooked fish*

*Nimono, a simmered dish*

*Yakimono, a grilled dish*

*A steamed dish*

### **2.3.1 Regular Kaiseki structure**

Usually there are at least three more courses offered according to the “one soup, eight sides”-principle. Kaiseki relies heavily on seasonality of ingredients, as does Japanese cuisine in general. There is seasonal rotation along with their four seasons of the year. While the dishes and their cooking methods do not change, one meal is not like the next. A full Kaiseki course might have up to fourteen individual plated courses. While the number of dishes looks quite intimidating, Japanese go by old Confucian proverb “Eat until you are eighty percent full”, so the portion sizes are purposefully small, so one eating will not feel overly full even after so many dishes.

Full dinner Kaiseki set is constructed by this form (Murata 2012, p. 13)

*Sakizuke, appetizer*

---

*Hassun, a seasonal plate with sushi and small side dishes*

*Mukozuke, sashimi with seasonal fish*

*Takiawase, separately simmered mix of vegetables and fish*

*Futamono, a lidded dish. Commonly soup*

*Yakimono, grilled dish. Fish normally, can also be vegetables*

*Su-zakana, palate cleanser. Vegetables seasoned with vinegar*

*Hiyashi-bachi. Served only during summer. Chilled vegetables*

*Naka-choko, second palate cleanser. Light soup*

*Shiizakana, substantial serving. Commonly hot pot*

*Gohan, seasoned rice*

*Ko no mono, pickled vegetables*

*Tome-wan, soup that goes with gohan and Ko no mono, miso-based*

*Mizumono, dessert. Fruits, confectionery, traditional Japanese sweets.*

### **2.3.2 Tea kaiseki structure**

Chefs might not prepare all that is mentioned above, it varies from customer to customer. And if a customer wants the Kaiseki experience, but prefers fewer dishes, tea kaiseki is an option. Served along an official tea ceremony, chano-yu, tea kaiseki offers seven dishes, accompanying a miso soup.

*Mukōzuke, “set to the far side”, usually sashimi*

*Nimono, simmered dish*

*Yakimono, grilled dish*

*Suimono, clear soup as a palate cleanser*

*Hassun, seasonal plate*

*Yutō, hot water with browned rice added*

*Ko no mono, pickles served with Yutō*

Procedure on tea Kaiseki is a bit different from standard Kaiseki, as it is served before actual tea ceremony, following Sen no Rikyu’s idea of helping people enjoy intense powdered tea. Longevity of this cuisine is showcased in the restaurant Hyoutei that has served Kaiseki for almost 400 years (Yu & Sealy 2016).

Main locations where to enjoy well-prepared Kaiseki meals seem to be found in Tokyo and Kyoto, as Kaiseki is commonly seen as the epitome of Kyoto cuisine. Yoshino Murata, one of leading Kaiseki chefs keeps a restaurant, Kikunoi, in Kyoto. As it is commonly called Japanese haute cuisine, authentic Kaiseki servings are not cheap. Prices start approximately at ¥25,000, (TableAll 2017) which translates to roughly two hundred euros (Forex 7.12.2017).

## 2.4 Cuisine

Japanese cooking relies not only in taste, but in visual sense as well. Japanese people eat with their eyes first. Kaiseki goes by this principle, offering carefully constructed dishes in perfectly refined manner. Everything is considered, beginning from cutlery. Dishes are presented in either bowls or plates, which accentuate the dish itself.

As mentioned before, Kaiseki relies heavily on seasonality. Chefs might not even have any kind of menu in their restaurant, because ingredients vary every time a Kaiseki dinner is prepared. Only thing that is permanent in this style, is how the dishes are prepared. There is often some form of meaning included in a dish or its ingredients included. This is shown most prominent in dishes prepared during holidays, different festivals and events. Cooking methods are always the same, ingredients showcase time of the year, special occasions, holiday theme, area where restaurants sit, and so forth. (McCarron 2017).

Kaiseki is most commonly served in restaurants specialized in the field, like Murata's Kikunoi, that has been awarded three Michelin stars (Kikunoi 2017) or Kunio Tokuoka's Kitcho, that are both located in Kyoto. Or the other option is to find a *ryokan*, Japanese style inn, that serves kaiseki style meals to the rooms. (Japan Guide 2014)

## 2.5 Workshop

Thesis was formed as a workshop. Definition of workshop according to Merriam-Webster dictionary, it is meant to be "a brief intensive educational program for a relatively small group of people that focuses especially on techniques and skills in a particular field" (Merriam-Webster n.d). Workshop model was an ideal format for this thesis, it would not take much time from participants, it is concise package of information for anyone interested. It also meant easy modifiability if such needs would occur.

A successful workshop is usually described as *rich in end result, a growth base for new ideas and a platform for new projects* (Ahtinen 2014, p. 14).

Workshop in this particular thesis was divided into two separate instances, first part being an educational lecture about Kaiseki and its history, practises and standards. Second part was a cooking workshop, where participants were handed instructions, and were able to have a learning experience of their own. Kaiseki can be greatly appreciated by just eating, but the author thinks it is even better understood when customer gets to see what goes into making these elaborate dishes. Workshops like these help seeing the effort that goes into a plate.

### **3 Working methods and procedures**

First stage of thesis took qualitative research for gathering material, from where an hour-long lecture would be formed. Author collected information via literature obtained from various sources, including libraries, the Internet, and pre-existing information of the author's. Internet was the main source of information for this thesis, as printed literature was sparse in whole of Etelä-Karjala region's libraries. Internet provided better results, while part of articles and news had repetitive facts. Also having little to no understanding in Japanese language, caused some issues, as majority of the history of Kaiseki was written only in Japanese. Having found sufficient information, author compiled it into a PowerPoint-slideshow for a lecture in a way that she deemed would showcase Kaiseki the best. Basic information first for the beginners, showcasing basic principles, table settings, ingredients and mechanics. Having those first, it was much easier to move into Kaiseki itself.

#### **3.1 Information gathering**

Gathering material for the lecture proved to be quite challenging, it took more time than first anticipated, finding usable information here and there and gathering everything together took about a month and some days. Author had some know-how of her own about Japanese culture and language due to studies in a community college a few years back. There the main point was on the language itself, but we also had some culture and cuisine lessons in between. Information studies were also backed up with cooking videos, blogs and vlog, mainly hosted in Youtube. Channels like Cooking with Dog and Ochikeron were helpful with

menu planning and overall cuisine studies. The recipe for chawanmushi was picked up from the channel Cooking with Dog for example. Author also likes to discuss about food in general with people. Sharing ideas and recipes among friends has been beneficial, and author's Japanese friends have been giving off record comments and ideas while making the menu. Showing prior enthusiasm to the subject was an important addition to the author in this thesis, so that the audience would understand the importance and love for the subject.

Libraries were helpful with their cuisine sections, albeit they did not carry books dedicated to Kaiseki, and in some cases the books were including other Asian cuisines as well. Libraries in Saimaa UAS, Joutseno and Lappeenranta central libraries were used in this project. The library in Joutseno had almost all of the books used in this thesis, since the culinary section does not seem to be that popular, which was good for this project. Lappeenranta library would have had some interesting ones, but those were loaned out at the time they were needed, and the wait was quite lengthy. Author was about to order some beneficial books to herself, but the prices online were not student friendly, so library and internet sources were the only options in this case.

Majority of the intel came from the Internet via Google searches, and tracing Wikipedia articles to their respective sources. Some of them were completely in Japanese, and thus useless. Google gave pretty accurate results with few keywords, but after a while they went repetitive and did not yield any new information. Kaiseki is a niche thing, so information is not abundant. And as mentioned before, Youtube was used as a source, following native content makers, that are well versed in their topic.

Forming the lecture itself was a lot easier as a process, having preorganized information, that was easy to add on the PowerPoint-slideshow. It took less than a week, with all the adding of new information, retracting unimportant bits out and fine tuning the slideshow itself. Presentation was then rehearsed a few times over to make it sound as professional as possible. Author had test audiences to help with stage fright. Presentation of the lecture was Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 at Saimaa university of Applied Sciences classroom 256 with 15 participants attending. Total presentation time was one hour, as pre-planned



at earlier stages, with questions from participants and receiving feedback from the presentation.

### 3.2 Workshop planning

Second part of the workshop, cooking a kaiseki meal needed careful planning. Menu needed to be suitable for as many participants as possible, so simple tastes and easy to prepare dishes were key. Inspiration was gathered from various food networks, including TV, food blogs that had Kaiseki menus written, and Finnish season of Christmas. Planning menu for this group was the author's responsibility, as it would have turned much more difficult to adjust the whole group's preferences and tastes into the menu. After consideration, finalized menu was as follows.

*Miso soup*

*Sashimi, cold smoked salmon roses*

*Kabocha no nimono*

*Yakimono, Grilled salmon with soy glaze*

*Futamono, Chawanmushi*

Sashimi here is not totally uncooked fish, as it might be intimidating for someone who has no experience in Asian cuisine. These recipes were tested in author's home kitchen before taking them out into cooking workshop. A rough estimate of fifteen participants were agreed upon with supervisor, and ingredient needs calculated based on that figure. Author went to purchase necessary items, costs were covered by the partner of thesis. Items total was 106€ for fifteen participants. Facilities were provided by partner as well, but if facility rent had been included, author was given a figure of three hundred euros. Total costs would have been four hundred and six euros, and roughly twenty-eight euros per participant to break even. If the author was a true specialist in the field, the price for a regular consumer was suggested being somewhere around eighty to hundred euros per person, if specialist salary was included.

Cooking part of workshop was implemented on 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2017. Total of thirteen participants, and a special guest attended the workshop. Author worked as a specialist in the kitchen, helping participants with recipes and cooking stages. Feedback was again collected on scene, after workshop was finished.

## **4 Empirism**

The goal of a project-based thesis is to let the student to show that they have learned the theory of their field of specialization and are capable of applying the theory in real life. Project-based thesis gives an opportunity to show their know-how, which would be difficult or impossible to show with just a written report. (Metropolia Wiki 2012.) End products of project-based thesis vary from project to project. It might be a book, instructions, an event or other tangible thing.

Research question and goal for this thesis was to find out if the author could form a working concept of a Kaiseki workshop, and educate others, if they are interested in the subject. As a secondary goal was the knowledge if this workshop would be possible to market outside the school premises, and would it work for enthusiasts as well.

Workshop as a concept needed thorough thinking from the author. After some thinking it felt as the best solution for a subject that requires more senses than just vision. The workshop was formed following instructions from Mind Tools. They had a short, easy to understand key points that were Goals, Attendance, Location, Agenda and Follow-up. First steps were about the goals of the workshop, which were mentioned in the previous paragraph, and audience and location were selected well in advance, as the whole thesis process revolved around school premises.

### **4.1 Lecture**

The workshop is divided into two parts, a lecture and food preparation/tasting sections. Lecture of the theory was held first, aiming to be from 45 minutes to an hour. Powerpoint slides were used as the main visual aid, slides holding key

words and imagery regarding the topic. The content of the lecture has information of Japanese cuisine and cookery before going into actual Kaiseki.

First part of the lecture was dedicated to basic information of Japanese cuisine, such as cookware, condiments and usual principles of the cuisine. Having key words and sentences up on the Powerpoint slides was a helpful tool in pacing the lecture and helping participants follow the teaching.

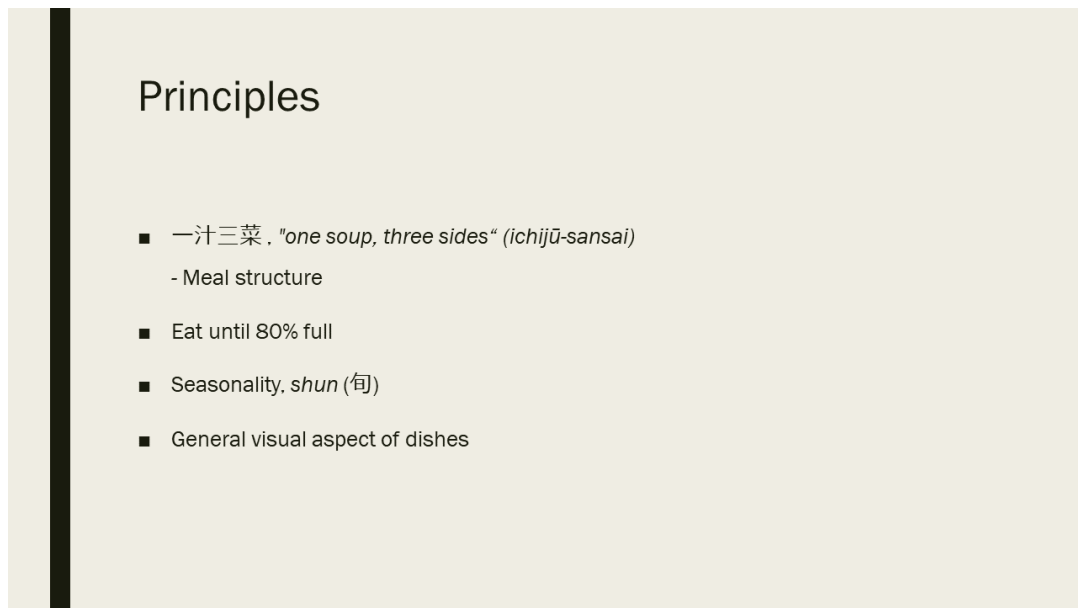


Figure 1 Principles

In the figure 1 above are the principles that are followed in Kaiseki, as well as in normal Japanese cooking, they guide portion amount, visual cues, and ingredients. It is easier to plan and understand Kaiseki dining when you know the guiding elements.

Official Kaiseki part started with history of the dining event, from the meaning of the word itself, evolving of the dining from monks to higher class event. Kaiseki draws inspiration from multiple sources and kitchen styles that are listed in the bottom line of Figure 2. On top of these, the Japanese thinking of *wabi-sabi* (McCarron 2017), Japanese aesthetics, which includes characteristics of asymmetry, simplicity and integrity of natural objects among other things, is also a prominent feature.

## Kaiseki

- “Kaiseki” 懷石 as a word originally had little to do with food
  - Characters stand for “bosom” and “stone”
- Comes from monks in training, who carried warm stones in their robes to ward off hunger
- Later meaning moved to stand for light meals to ease hunger pains
- Sen no Rikyū connected the food with tea seremonies
- Evolved from a bowl of miso soup and three sides
  - Today includes an appetizer, sashimi, simmered dish, and a steamed course as a standard
- Inspiration comes from imperial court cuisine, Buddhist temple cuisine, Samurai cuisine and tea kaiseki

Figure 2 Kaiseki

After a short history lesson, the slides talked about different styles of Kaiseki, which are, as previously mentioned standard Kaiseki, tea Kaiseki and a regional speciality Kyoto Kaiseki. These styles have their own tricks, and one is not an expert in the field after tasting just one. Although the names on dishes are the same in each style, content varies radically. What remains constant is the price, which was also covered in the presentation. The last segment of the lecture covered comparison of similar type of cuisine styles (Figure 3).

## Comparison

- Vs. Korean royal cuisine (Joseon Wangjo Gungjung Yori)
  - + Small individual dishes
  - + Multiple courses
  - +/- showcase of regional food
- - Mapped plate order
  - Balances on color, rather than ingredients
  - 12 main dishes + side dishes



Figure 3 Comparison

First was the Korean Royal cuisine, that is strikingly similar to Kaiseki style. An educational video of this cuisine on Youtube by a Canadian couple living in Ko-

rea showcased vibrant individual dishes. Simon and Martina mention in the video and in their blog post that this Royal Cuisine dinner will take over an hour to eat (Stawski & Stawski 2015) like Kaiseki does. Difference is that the Royal cuisine has this same three-table set seen in Figure 3 for each individual eater, with their own main and side dishes (Serious Eats partners 2015) Author wanted to have this as a part of the lecture, inspired by an innocent question from a relative that “Does not all Asian cuisine look pretty much the same?” Author added Japanese Osechi, New Year’s special lunch box art in the comparison section as well, because they were easy to mix, Osechi looks like a lunch box version of Kaiseki and dishes are often as impressive. Comparison concluded the lecture, and the author was prepared to answer any questions the participants might have, and a few students actually did have some nice questions.

## **4.2 Cooking class**

Second part of the workshop was for the participants to try out the dishes. Cooking and tasting were in the timetable for the group Setting out the menu, mentioned in chapter three, and dividing the workload for the participating group was the primary task for the author, as well as guiding the cooking processes and helping anyone that needed it. The cooking itself was majorly conducted by the group attending. Participation was not great at first, but there were enough people to execute all dishes. And as a backup, if more participants were to come in, the author and supervisor had organized an extra sushi station for those without role in the actual Kaiseki setting. Sushi does not officially belong to the Kaiseki set, but it can be served as a part of the Hassun plate. The sushi station was indeed needed later on, when more participants showed up than was anticipated. It was said in Delimitations chapter that sushi is not a key part of Kaiseki, but as participants were this many, it was necessary to accommodate them somehow, and sushi was one thing that was still tied to Japanese cuisine, and we had ingredients to prepare some.

As the menu had five items in total, palate cleansers were not needed in this short course lunch. Warm items were served first, including miso soup and chawanmushi, steamed egg custard, that they would be enjoyable to the participants. The dishes are meant to be plated to small, individual bowls and plates,

but as this workshop had limited amount of cutlery and counter space, some items were served buffet-style where participants could get their portions when they wanted.



Figure 4 Chawanmushi



Figure 5 Yakishake

Participants were also given a chance to try preparing more ornamental dishes, that are a key part of the Kaiseki experience. Dishes do not usually have many ingredients, so that the taste will not become muddled and eater is able tell apart the pieces. In the tasting menu prepared in this workshop, one of the

dishes like these was sashimi, salmon roses. As previously mentioned, the salmon was cold smoked, so it does not fit sashimi category totally, but this was an intentional choice.



Figure 6 Salmon roses

As a final piece of the workshop, all participants sat down and had a taste of the dishes. Food was set out to the Saimaa UAS cafeteria in a separate alcove, that the experience would not be disturbed by normal cafeteria users, and we would not take space from them. After tasting there was discussion and feedback gathering, commenting was encouraged. These comments and feedback were collected, and they will be considered in probable future projects the author might have.

## 5 Results

Result of this thesis was a functional workshop, that was run quite smoothly in the author's opinion. Overall project research questions were met and answered. Author managed to build a working model, that with adjustments could be sold forward to other instances, like community colleges. Listening to the feedback from participants of this workshop would produce a better functioning project, and that feedback will be useful for future.

As all projects, this one was met with few setbacks as well, mostly with timetables. Running this workshop with the side of course projects had timing issues, and author needs to improve timetable planning to stop this from happening in the future. As one of the project goals was to learn and educate others, author learned a whole lot about essential skills in working life alongside book knowledge in Kaiseki and hopes that participants learned about this magnificent cuisine as well.

## **5.1 Feedback from lecture**

In this chapter the author will go over the feedback gained from two different instances, first from the lecture part of this workshop. Author as a lecturer is not one of extreme confidence, so the presentation was quite an intimidating feat. Presentation was practised beforehand to scope the timeframe it was given, and it held pretty much spot on. Participants generally seemed to find the lecture quite alright, and a few improvement suggestions were given.

As author tried to keep the Powerpoint slides as clutter free as possible, they were simple, mainly keywords and few images. Some of the listeners would have preferred a bit more information on the slides regarding all of the topics included. More overall information about Japan would have made a difference, giving a better base for those who have little knowledge of Japan. This was noted, and author thought this beforehand, but decided to stick with less general information for the school students, as they are studying tourism already. One part that was suggested to organize differently was the actual Kaiseki dishes. All of the possible dishes were presented, and it was hoped that the key ones would have a more prominent display to help remember them better.

Like mentioned in the above paragraph, presentations are not a strong forte of the author, but a part of this thesis was to practise skills needed later for this career orientation, and this was the perfect time to do just that. Feedback was mostly positive, there was suggestions of showing more involvement and the sides of personal interest in the topic, like how the author ended up thinking Japanese culture altogether. Last half of the presentation went more smoothly,



after getting used to speaking in front of audience, which was also noted by the listeners.

## **5.2 Feedback from cooking class**

Cooking class took place a few weeks later than originally scheduled, due to the school course timetables. This might have influenced the participants, as there was a request to include the audience in the menu planning, so that they could put their newly attained information to use right away, rather than let it sit for weeks before doing anything and risking forgetting everything. Original plan was to have both parts close to each other, so this would not happen. In the same thought, one participant voiced a relevant note of allergies and other food limitations that could be addressed when audience is present while planning. Comments about the food were generally positive, so menu was successful for this occasion. Participants liked cooking the dishes, although they were simple, and had an enjoyable time eating. Even an unexpected guest from outside the course attended the lunch and gave a good review of the dishes.

## **6 Discussion**

This thesis project felt quite an intimidating feat in personal perspective. It was similar to projects that the author had participated in, but never built one herself from scratch. It also taught a lot of skills that are needed in professional career later on, so it was worthwhile to go through this whole process.

As the process is looked back, author thinks there is potential in the project. It caters to current trends, and although there was not any official questionnaire held, there are people interested in the cuisine and its nuances, as author has discovered during this process through discussion with friends and acquaintances. This type of workshop is relatively simple to organize, and if the holder of said workshop is knowledgeable enough, it is highly interesting to those striving to better themselves in cooking, and as it is meant to be organized in two parts, it is easy to take the customers into decision making. As such, the cooking class is modifiable to suit different dietary needs, and customers feel that they are in an important role and can utilize their newly acquired information.

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# KAISEKI DINING

Milka Aalto

1200970



# Who am I?

- Milka Aalto
- Saimaa UAS student, EHRTS 12
- Lecture as a part of my thesis work

# Content of the lecture

- What is Kaiseki?
- Back to basics
- Kaiseki explained
- Little bit about prices
- Comparison

# What is Kaiseki?





# Why this topic?

- Current food trends, “bite size meals”
- Asian trend
- Health trends
- Personal interest
- Future career

# Back to basics of Japanese cuisine

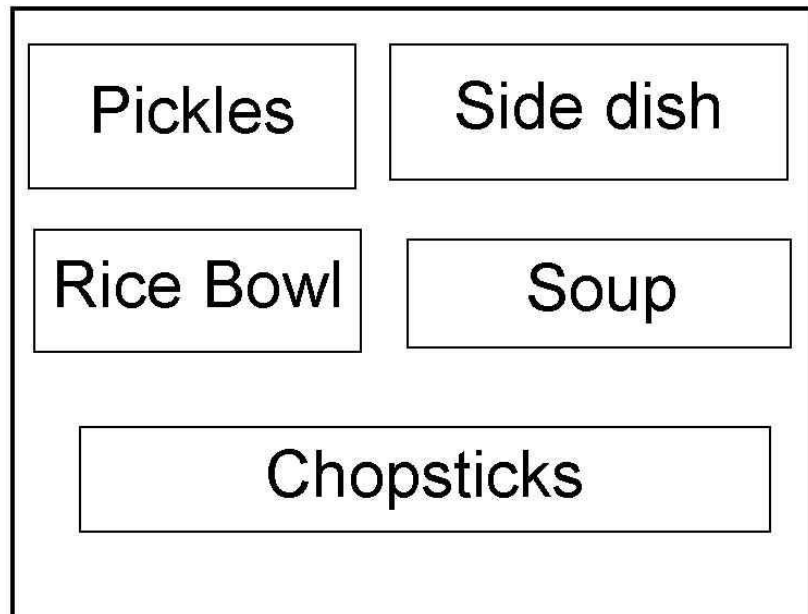
- Basic pantry includes;
  - Sugar, salt, rice vinegar, soy sauce, miso for seasoning ( +dashi)
  - Rice of varying kinds
  - Seaweed (nori, kombu)
  - Katsuobushi, skipjack tuna flakes for making dashi

# Principles

- 一汁三菜 , "*one soup, three sides*" (*ichijū-sansai*)
  - Meal structure
- Eat until 80% full
- Seasonality, *shun* (旬)
- General visual aspect of dishes

# Table setting and manners

- Basic setting
- If you have shared dishes, you will have rice, soup and chopsticks close to you



- “Itadakimasu” & “Gochisōsama deshita”
- Do not poke food with chopsticks
- You shouldn’t pour your own drinks
- Same basics manners as in western world
  - ....except you can slurp your noodles.

# Cookware

- Knives
- Kitchen chopsticks
- Earthenware pots
- Rice cooker



# Washoku, yoshoku and chuuka

- Washoku – Dishes of Japanese origin
- Yoshoku – Adaptations of European food  
-> Curry, tonkatsu, croquettes
- Chuuka – Integrated from Chinese cooking  
-> even things we consider thoroughly japanese

# Kaiseki

- “Kaiseki” 懷石 as a word originally had little to do with food
  - Characters stand for “bosom” and “stone”
- Comes from monks in training, who carried warm stones in their robes to ward off hunger
- Later meaning moved to stand for light meals to ease hunger pains
- Sen no Rikyū connected the food with tea seremonies
- Evolved from a bowl of miso soup and three sides
  - Today includes an appetizer, sashimi, simmered dish, and a steamed course as a standard
- Inspiration comes from imperial court cuisine, Buddhist temple cuisine, Samurai cuisine and tea kaiseki



# Styles

- Cha-kaiseki
  - Meal revolves around a formal tea ceremony, called chanoyu
  - 7 dishes in total
- Kaiseki
  - Standard of 5 dishes, usually chefs offer more.
- Kyo-kaiseki
  - Basically same as Kaiseki, just centered in Kyoto area, dishes usually Kyoto specials

# Dishes

- Sakizuke
  - Appetizer
- Hassun
  - Seasonal plate, sushi with smaller side dishes
- Mukozuke
  - Sliced dish of seasonal sashimi
- Takiawase
  - A mix of vegetables and fish, simmered separately
- Futamono
  - Lidded dish, usually a soup

# Dishes

- Yakimono
  - Broiled, seasonal fish. Can be a vegetarian dish as well.
- Su-zakana
  - Palate cleanser, vegetables and herbs in vinegar dressing
- Hiyashi-bachi (only served during summer)
  - Chilled dish, vegetables
- Naka-choko
  - Second palate cleanser, a very light dish (soup etc.)
- Shiizakana
  - A substantial dish, usually a hot pot

# Dishes

- Gohan
  - Rice, might be seasoned, or a donburi dish
- Ko no mono
  - Seasonal pickled vegetables
- Tome-wan
  - Soup served with Gohan and Ko no mono. Traditionally miso based.
- Mizumono
  - Dessert, wagashi, fruit, confection, ice cream or cake

# Pricing

- Not a cheap meal today
- Kikunoi, one of the leading restaurants in Kaiseki charges from 160€ and up to 250€ for dinner sets, without tax
- “Lunch kaiseki” around 20€+

# Comparison

- Vs. Korean royal cuisine (Joseon Wangjo Gungjung Yori)
  - + Small individual dishes
  - + Multiple courses
  - +/- showcase of regional food
- - Mapped plate order
  - Balances on color, rather than ingredients
  - 12 main dishes + side dishes



- Vs. Osechi
- New year's traditional food
- Bento (lunch box)
- 12 dishes, each one has a different meaning



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